Shakesperience: NJ
THINGS TO KNOW AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE FESTIVAL

The Piece

• Each group performs one or more scenes from any of Shakespeare’s works. Your whole performance must be between 15 and 25 minutes. Really. If you run over time, we will cut off your performance and you will have to sit out the next year.

• Cuts are permitted; modern language adaptations are not. Double check any script that you have not prepared yourself. The words should be Shakespeare’s own (kids don’t need “watered down” Shakespeare). Short—we mean short—modern English “bridges” are permitted between scenes or as introductions. At least 90% of your presentation must consist of Shakespeare’s language.

• Music may accompany performances. Taped music or sound effects should be played on a portable stereo brought by your stage manager for this purpose. Live music must be performed by student cast members.

Tech

• Each group should include a student stage manager.

• The Festival sites (The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey and Rider University) will provide basic furniture for everyone’s use—a table, chairs, benches—which you can view at an orientation and walk-through after your school is accepted into the Festival. Do not bring additional furniture. You may bring whatever other small props you are going to use in a single roadbox labeled with your school’s name. The roadbox should be no larger than 1 meter x 1 meter x 1 meter (about the size of a large Rubbermaid tub). Do not plan to bring 1000 shopping bags. Things get lost, crushed, stepped on; people get upset and frustrated. Please do not bring valuables, either for stage or personal use.

• Forbidden props include liquids, glass or other breakables, real food (even if not consumed), fire, stage blood, non-stage weapons, guns of any kind, dry ice, fog machines, confetti, dancing elephants, etc.

• We strongly encourage you to arrive already in your costumes and make-up. If this is impossible, morning groups may change before the first performance of the day, and afternoon groups may change during lunch. In extreme circumstances, you may change during the performance before yours; however, you must arrange this ahead of time with the Education Department. Space is limited in dressing and make-up areas. Please keep costumes and make-up simple.

• Basic stage lighting (general illumination) will be the same for all performances. No blackouts.

• No microphones or amplification of any kind will be allowed, even if it is battery-powered. (Shakespeare’s actors didn’t need microphones; neither do yours!)
• The adult director and student stage manager must attend an orientation session and walk-through prior to the Festival. Previous Festival experience or a private look at the theater does not fulfill this requirement. You also need to give us your $150 registration fee and other paperwork at the walk-through.

Logistics
• All Festival participants—including teachers and adult chaperones—are expected to stay the entire day at the theatre and to be a spirited audience for all performances. Each Festival day begins at about 8:00 a.m. and concludes by about 4:00 p.m.

• This event lasts all day. We expect that for this one day, students will make other arrangements concerning jobs, rehearsals, sports practices, etc., in order to remain for the entire Festival. If this requirement proves impossible for any of your cast members, please indicate so on your registration form.

• Please limit the size of your entire student group (cast and crew combined) to 25. Our performance spaces are small and intimate.

• Each student group must be accompanied by the directing teacher and between one and three other adults. Adults will be seated with the students.

• We may be able to seat “groundlings”—additional students from your school who want to watch the entire Festival but not participate—but we won’t know if we have space for them until after all participating schools have given us a head count. Groundlings must have their own adult chaperones. We cannot confirm groundling seats until mid-April. There will also be limited seating made available for parents and anyone else who may wish to “drop in” for just a portion of the day.

The Festival
• Commentators will present awards of many kinds for excellence in all aspects of performance and production, e.g., ensemble acting, best birdsong, demonstrated understanding, diction, or general foolishness.

• Each student will receive a tangible token of his or her participation in the Festival.

• After the awards ceremony, commentators will offer critiques to interested casts. Commentaries are optional, and you don’t have to decide until the last moment if you would like the commentators to give your cast 5-10 minutes of concentrated feedback. Casts staying to hear their own critique will stay to hear the critiques of all—and the whole cast must stay.

• Students will be treated to lots of great Shakespeare, additional first-class entertainment, and careful, positive attention by extraordinary professional commentators.